



Title: Big Island Nature Park Improvements Update

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Purpose: To provide the Board of Managers an update regarding recent actions by Orono City Council to award a construction contract for improvements to Big Island Nature Park.

Background: At the February 27, 2020 Board of Managers meeting, staff presented Big Island Nature Park Improvements final design plans for Board review. District staff had evaluated the plan set through design development using guidelines set forth in the conservation easement and management plan for Big Island Nature Park. Through this analysis, staff found the plan set to be in conformance, and the Board of Managers raised no concerns regarding this determination. The final design plan proposed no new improvements from 80% review, which are summarized as follows:

Proposed improvements in the Natural Areas:

- Conversion of existing trails to ADA standards
- 1:1 sign replacement
- Winter installation of temporary, removable bollards

Proposed improvements in the Recreation Areas:

- Establishment of ADA trail from city docks to visitor center
- Conversion of existing trails to ADA standards
- 1:1 sign replacement
- Installation of vault toilet(s)
- Installation of shade structure and picnic tables

The final design plan set also addressed District staff requests to incorporate a more comprehensive tree protection plan, provide thorough detail regarding shoreline restoration at the construction access and staging locations, and install erosion control practices, all of which are intended to reduce land disturbance.

Current Status:

After receiving three bids for construction of the planned Big Island Nature Park Improvements, Orono staff sought authorization from city council to award a construction contract to Blackstone Contractors on April 14, 2020. Due to funding constraints, Orono staff structured the base construction bid to include only trail improvements and included all other amenities as bid alternates: construction of a vault toilet, construction of the picnic shelter, and construction of two or four picnic tables. Orono city council approved awarding the base bid for trail improvements and the alternate of one vault toilet to be constructed near the public docks. Big Island Legacy, the 501(c)(3) formed to fundraise for improvements intends to continue seeking additional funds to construct the remaining improvements at a later time.

The construction project is subject to the MCWD Erosion Control Rule. The City of Orono applied for an Erosion Control Permit, which was subsequently issued as MCWD permit #20-112 on April 14, 2020.

Next Steps:

District staff intends to continue coordinating with city of Orono staff through the construction process of the Big Island Nature Park Improvements Project.